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ABSTRACT

Passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which includes the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant program, has caused dramatic changes in welfare reform. PRWORA emphasizes a Work First approach to welfare reform; to receive full TANF funding, states must meet the minimum required work participation rate. Welfare recipients are encouraged to engage in job search and seek work first instead of attending an adult education or training program, but adult education and training can be provided to welfare recipients under the Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work Program. Delivery systems that integrate different services are a comprehensive delivery system by which one entity provides the majority of services and a network system in which an agency specializes in providing one or several program components but collaborates with other agencies and programs to delivers. Potential strategies to create effective new adult education programs integrated with job/vocational training, job preparation, work activities, and work are as follows: the preemployment services model, the pre- and post-employment services model, contextualized learning, community service programs, family literacy programs, and employer-developed programs. (Appendixes include information on the effectiveness of the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program, possible components of integrated programming, and 50-item bibliography.) (YLB)

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Program Reports

Learn to Earn:
Issues Raised by Welfare Reform for Adult Education, Training and Work

Suzanne Knell
Literacy Leader Fellow 1996-97

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Volume III
Number 3, Part B

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Learn to Earn:
Issues Raised by Welfare Reform for Adult Education, Training and Work

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Acknowledgements

As Congress was developing the national welfare legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), I became concerned about how the legislation would affect adult education and training programs and individuals on welfare who attend the programs.

A Fellowship Grant became available to me through the National Institute for Literacy to study the effects of the new welfare legislation on adult education and training and on adult learners. The new welfare act minimized the role of adult education and training programs and placed a larger emphasis on work and work activities. However, I was determined to find the "points of entry" for adult education and training in welfare reform and make convincing arguments that, with programmatic changes, adult education and training programs should be primary components of a welfare-to-work program. At the same time, I did not want to minimize the importance of other work activities nor the significance of placing welfare participants into jobs.

Even though I began my journey examining the role of adult education in welfare reform, I quickly realized that I needed to explore all the components of a welfare-to-work program including adult education, job/vocational training, support services, countable work activities, work and post-employment services as well as the role of employers. The results of this expanded effort are contained in this report and in a video of a national teleconference on welfare reform.

I would like to thank many individuals who made this report possible. Sincere appreciation to Andy Hartman, Director of the NIFL, and Meg Young, former Fellowship Program Officer for NIFL, and the other fellowship recipients for their support. My trips to Washington D.C. and NIFL enabled me to visit with other NIFL staff, Alice Johnson, Susan Green and Sondra Stein, with whom I've been colleagues for more than a decade.

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Finally, to the welfare participants. I hope that in some small way the information in this report helps to guide effective policy and practice that will benefit everyone, but most of all you, in the future.

Learn to Earn: Issues Raised by Welfare Reform for Adult Education, Training and Work

Introduction

Dramatic changes in welfare reform have occurred throughout the nation since the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was passed in 1996. Since passage of the Act, each state has developed its own specific plan for implementing new welfare legislation. The Act provides general guidelines for state welfare plans resulting in some common threads across the state plans, but also allows great flexibility for states to develop their own specific rules and regulations to implement welfare reform.

The role of adult education[1] in welfare reform has been significantly modified within the national Act as well as within each state's plan. Thus, the frequency with which welfare participants are referred to adult education programs, the length of stay, and the course of study vary from state to state. In many states, adult education must be integrated with job/vocational training, job preparation, work activities or work.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: 1. to give a brief overview of the new welfare legislation and how it affects adult education and training; and 2. to outline potential strategies to create effective new adult education programs that are integrated with job/vocational training, job preparation, work activities and work.

Brief History of Welfare Reform

To give the reader a historical perspective of welfare reform and how the role of adult education and training differ between the previous and the new welfare systems, it is important to describe the underlying principles of those systems.

The previous welfare system was called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). With the passage of the Family Support Act of 1988, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS)[2] was added as an education and training program component to the AFDC system. Some, but not all, individuals receiving AFDC were required to attend JOBS programs where basic skills training was a primary program component. Under AFDC, welfare was an entitlement, that is individuals who were unable to work, find work or whose income fell below a certain level were entitled to a welfare payment. AFDC support could continue for an unlimited amount of time, and there were few work requirements attached. The AFDC/JOBS programs were bound by extensive federal rules and regulations.

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1 The term adult education and adult literacy will be used interchangeably throughout this report. For purposes of this report, the definition of adult education/literacy is the ability to read, write, compute, problem-solve and communicate at work, in the community and at home. Adult education/literacy includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.

2 See attachment 1 for a brief review of the JOBS program.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which includes the TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) block grant program, replaced AFDC/JOBS programs. Under the TANF program, temporary assistance is provided to welfare participants. There is a strong emphasis on work. TANF requires participants to work or participate in a countable work activity as defined by the states with specific time limits. Under TANF there is maximum flexibility for states to develop rules and regulations. As a result of this flexibility, 50 separate state welfare plans have been developed with some similarities but also many differences in the way they implement welfare reform.[3] There are, however, strict participation requirements which must be met by the state. Failure to meet these requirements could result in a sanction to the TANF block grant amount.

Philosophy of the Work First Approach

The PRWORA emphasizes a different approach to welfare reform which is labeled Work First. The approach requires welfare participants to search for and find work first before obtaining education or training. Participants are no longer encouraged to participate in long term adult education or training "up front". However, for participants who are not deemed job ready, short term education or training programs *may* be an acceptable first step. The design of Work First programs vary greatly in terms of the program goals, sequence of program activities, services offered and duration.[4] For individuals who face barriers to obtaining work, strategies to overcome those barriers such as education, training and/or support services *may* become a part of their plan to leave welfare. Therefore, even with a Work First approach, there are "points of entry" for adult education and training.

Specific Legislation that Affects Education, Training and Work

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and Temporary Assitance to Needy Families (TANF)

Changes under welfare reform include a 24 month time limit for those presently on welfare to find work or participate in a work activity as defined by the state. There is also a lifetime eligibility limit of five years for participants to receive welfare benefits. Therefore, the safety net provided for those who cannot support themselves and family members, for whatever reasons, has been limited to five years.

States must meet a minimum federally required work participation rate in order to receive full TANF funding for welfare program implementation. There are two basic requirements: 1. a certain percent of welfare participants must be placed into jobs or be engaged in a countable work activity as defined by the state and 2. the number of hours individuals must work each week is prescribed. The federal legislation requires an increasing percentage of individuals participating in work activities between 1997

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3 A portion of this information was provided by Garrett Murphy, Policy Analyst, during the *Learn to Earn* teleconference on September 17, 1997.

4 Brown, Amy, (1997). *Work First, How to Implement an Employment-Focused Approach in Welfare Reform.* New York, New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

and 2002. In addition, the number of hours per week in work activites also increases. Requirements differ for families with one parent and two parents as can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1	**Welfare Families with One Parent**[5]	
Year	**Minimum required work participation rate**	**Number of hours per week**
1997	25%	20
1998	30%	20
1999	35%	25
2000	40%	30
2001	45%	30
2002	50%	30

As can be seen in Table 2, two parent families (one or both parents together) must participate 35 hours per week. The first 30 hours must be in a countable work activity, the remaining 5 countable hours can be education.

Table 2	**Welfare Families with Two Parents**[6]	
Year	**Minimum required work participation rate of one or both parents together**	**Number of hours per week**
1997	75%	35
1998	75%	35
1999	90%	35
2000	90%	35
2001	90%	35
2002	90%	35

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5 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. (1996). Summary of Provisions: Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act of 1996, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. National Governors' Association, National Conference of State Legislatures, and American Public Welfare Association. (1996). Analysis of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, Washington, D.C.

6 Ibid.

Since there is a strong emphasis on placing participants into jobs or work activities, the federal legislation defines allowable work activities that *count* toward the work participation rate as well as work activities that are allowed but *do not count* toward the work participation rate. These defined activities are outlined in Table 3 and pertain to both one and two parent families.

Table 3

Federal Legislation (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)

Definition of allowable work activities that "count" toward state's work participation rate:

- unsubsidized employment
- subsidized (private/public) sector employment
- work experience*
- on the job training
- community service*
- providing child care to individuals in community service
- job search (6 weeks)
- vocational educational training* (restrictions apply)

Allowable work activities that do not count as work participation for the first 20 hours

- job skills training directly related to employment
- education directly related to employment, but only for those without a High School diploma
- satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or GED study**

*States are to define these allowable work activities.

**Is an allowable activity for teen age recipients

As can be seen in Table 3, adult education is an allowable work activity but does not count initially toward states' work participation rates. However, in cases where individuals participate in more than 20 hours of countable work activities, adult education provided above and beyond the required 20 hours, is an allowable work activity and therefore is an allowable expenditure.

Beginning in 1999, the number of hours required of individuals to work (or participate in a work activity) per week increases from 20 to 25 and in the year 2000 to 30 hours. Those additional hours may include education or training and count toward the work participation rate. For two parent families, one parent or both parents together may participate in 30 hours of a countable work activity, the other 5 hours may be in education or training.

In summary, *in order for states to receive full TANF funding, states must meet the minimum required work participation rate or face cuts in their block grants. Therefore, the emphasis on "getting a job" or participating in a countable work activity is tied to federal dollars while the emphasis on obtaining education and training is not. As a result, welfare participants are encouraged to engage in job search and seek work first instead of attending an adult education and/or training program.*

The argument is made by some individuals that changing the focus of welfare from an entitlement program to a transitional program requires states to strengthen employment-related services, design new performance measures and develop new strategies to promote client self-sufficiency.

Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work Program: An Addendum to State TANF Plans

Another initiative, the Welfare-to-Work Program administered by the Department of Labor (DOL), offers a window of opportunity for adult education and training. The Welfare-to-Work Program was added to the PRWORA of 1996 as an amendment to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. It requires each state to amend its TANF plan in order to be eligible for Welfare-to-Work program funding.

The purpose of the DOL State Administered Welfare-to-Work program ". . . is to move and keep individuals in lasting unsubsidized employment . . . and focuses on assistance to hard-to-employ welfare recipients living in high poverty areas."[7] Local programs are administered through the Private Industry Councils (PICs) within each state, and states are required to assure that the PICs coordinate the expenditure of the Welfare-to-Work funds with TANF funds.

According to the regulations, eligible activities include:

1. Job readiness activities financed through job vouchers or through contracts with public or private providers
2. Employment activities which consist of any of the following:
   a. Community service programs
   b. Work experience programs
   c. Job creation through public or private sector employment wage subsidies
   d. On-the-job-training
3. Job placement services financed through job vouchers or through contracts with public or private providers
4. Post-employment services financed through job vouchers or through contracts with public or private providers, which are provided after an individual is placed in one of the employment activities (a-d) or in any subsidized or unsubsidized job

   Post employment activities may include:

   1. Basic educational skills training
   2. Occupational skills training
   3. English as a Second Language (ESL), and
   4. Mentoring

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7 Federal Register: November 18, 1997 (Volume 62, Number 222) Rules and Regulations on the Welfare-to-Work grants.

Therefore, basic educational skills training, occupational skills training and ESL can be provided to welfare participants as a post-employment activity under the Welfare-to-Work program.

Revealing Statistics

Adult education and training is an essential component[8] in an effective and comprehensive welfare-to-work delivery system designed to help participants become economically self sufficient through well-paying jobs. There are several reasons why:

1. Studies demonstrate that the educational levels of adults are closely linked to their income levels
2. Almost 50% of welfare participants in the nation do not have a High School Diploma
3. An estimated 66% to 75% of welfare participants performed at the two lowest literacy levels on the National Adult Literacy Survey
4. The average literacy level of welfare recipients is below that of unskilled laborers and assemblers[9]

The *National Adult Literacy Survey* (NALS)[10] and the resulting study entitled, *Literacy and Dependency: The Literacy Skills of Welfare Recipients in the United States,*[11] underscores the importance of education for welfare participants. The NALS survey is reported in three proficiency scales: prose literacy, document literacy and quantitative literacy. Each scale is divided into five proficiency levels with Level 1 the lowest, and Level 5 the highest. For those individuals who were classified as performing at Level 1, the majority of the tasks completed successfully fell into Level 1. However, some of the individuals at Level 1 may have performed one or two tasks successfully in other levels. The same held true for individuals who were classified as performing at Levels 2, 3, 4, and 5.

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8 Other components include job/vocational training, job search, job readiness, job development, support services, job placement, allowable work activities that count toward the states' participation rate (see Table 3), work and post employment services.

9 These statistics come from data from the *National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)* and the report entitled *Literacy and Dependency: The Literacy Skills of Welfare Recipients in the United States* by Paul E. Barton and Lynn Jenkins, 1995. Additional information was included from the *National Institute for Literacy Policy Update: How to Prepare for Welfare Changes, Part I*, October 28, 1996.

10 The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) was ordered by Congress in 1988 and conducted by Educational Testing Services (ETS) for the National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

11 This report was written by Paul E. Barton and Lynn Jenkins of the Policy Information Center of ETS and "explores the literacy dimensions of dependency, using previously unpublished data for the 1992 NALS and experimental program research on raising skills through literacy training and basic education". The Literacy and dependency report examines information gathered from the NALS specifically related to " . . . the literacy skills of adults age 16 and over who received Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), other public assistance, or food stamps during the 12 months prior to the study."

According to the report, approximately 50% of the welfare recipients surveyed were at the lowest skill level (Level 1) as measured by the NALS. Respondents at this level were unlikely to be successful at tasks when they included distracting information. For example, if asked to identify gross pay for year-to-date on a pay stub, it was likely that recipients would not perform successfully because the task included "distracting information" that seemed plausible but was incorrect. An example of a piece of distracting information on the pay stub was the current or monthly pay, which might seem like a plausible answer but was not the correct answer.

Participants who performed at the lowest level were able to perform tasks that did not have distractors. For example, they were able to read a short piece of text (such as a brief newspaper article) to find a piece of information that was identical to information given separately in a directive. The individuals were also able to locate a piece of information in a sports article, and they were able to underline a sentence explaining an action described in a short article.

Individuals who performed at the lowest level were not completely unable to read, calculate or document information, and they were able to perform basic tasks. Indeed, the report states that "Not all welfare recipients demonstrated limited literacy skills and many people with limited skills do, in fact, hold down jobs." On the other hand, tasks required in well-paying jobs in today's world of work, normally require higher level skills.

An additional 25% of the welfare recipients performed at the second level. These individuals ". . . demonstrated the ability to locate a piece of information in a piece of text even when distracting information was present. They also appeared to have little difficulty integrating, comparing and contrasting two or more pieces of information found in a piece of printed material. Those performing at this level were able to underline the meaning of a term in a brochure on government benefits, locate an intersection on a street map and calculate postage and fees for certified mail."

Individuals who performed at the second level were not able to successfully perform the majority of the tasks at the third level. The tasks that most of these individuals had difficulty with were writing a brief letter explaining a billing error, entering information into an automobile maintenance record form and calculating the difference between the regular and sales prices of an item in an advertisement.

As stated earlier, an estimated 66% to 75% of welfare recipients could not consistently perform tasks at Levels 3, 4 or 5. Rarely were the individuals able to correctly respond to more challenging literacy tasks requiring higher level reading, quantitative skills and problem-solving skills. *The new welfare legislation emphasizes work placement first, but the NALS study clearly showed that up to 75% of the welfare recipients perform at Levels 1 and 2, which is below the level required of unskilled laborers and assemblers.*

This is not to say, however, that individuals performing at Levels 1 and 2 could not work at all, but the jobs at which these individuals most likely would be successful are jobs that require low-level quantitative, prose and documentation skills without distracting information present. Many individuals from this segment of the welfare population might also perform successfully in other work activities, including community service programs, on-the-job training, work experience and vocational training.

Data from the NALS report presents a persuasive argument for adult education and training to play an increasingly important role in welfare reform. The *Literacy and*

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Dependency report states that ". . . in the adult population as a whole [those on and off welfare], the likelihood of being on welfare goes up as literacy levels go down; the two are intertwined". Furthermore, "The higher the literacy levels, the greater the number of weeks worked during the year, the higher the average weekly wage, and the higher the annual income. The same pattern holds true in the welfare population. However, wages and earnings do not tend to rise as much for welfare recipients as for the adults in the general population."

The report concludes that, "*Welfare dependency can be reduced in two ways: 1. by increasing literacy levels in the general population to reduce the risk of falling into dependency; and 2. by raising the literacy levels of those already on welfare to help them become more financially self-sufficient.*" It is essential, therefore, that adult education and training be a key component of welfare reform.

Integrated Program Components in a Welfare-to-Work Program

In response to the challenges of welfare reform, the adult education and training community needs to explore how to create different delivery models that integrate education, training, support services, job search, job readiness, coaching, mentoring, job placement, work activities, jobs and post employment services. Though delivery models will vary, some common program components will exist across programs. Attachment 2 includes a list of possible program components in a welfare-to-work program. While the list is not all inclusive, it does provide a starting point for conceptualizing how the components might be integrated into a comprehensive delivery system for welfare recipients.

Two Types of Delivery Systems

Agencies, adult schools, colleges or employment and training programs might create a *comprehensive delivery system* by which the majority of these services are provided through one entity. For example, community colleges might provide a variety of education and training programs which could be integrated and tied to specific job skills as well as to communication, problem-solving and team skills. Because colleges also work with businesses to provide education and training to employees, there is a natural link to work. In addition, some colleges provide day care and counseling—the types of support services needed by welfare participants. In some states a public school, area vocational system, employment and training center or community-based organization might provide these comprehensive services. In addition, one or more companies might function as the "hub" around which jobs, training and support are provided to individuals.

A second type of delivery system that can be effective is a *network system* in which a public school, community-based-organization, training center or college specializes in providing one or several program components but collaborates with other agencies and programs to deliver a number of other services. For example, a public school might provide adult education, job/vocational training and job preparation to adults but might also develop collaborative partnerships with organizations that provide support services such as child care, counseling, health care, housing and job development. The business community should be an automatic partner in any welfare-to-work program, and unions should be a partner whenever appropriate. Finally, post-employment services might be provided as a joint effort among several of the partners involved in the collaboration.

In both the comprehensive and network delivery systems, partnerships must be forged to create effective welfare-to-work programs. The number and type of partners, and the sequencing and the linkages of program components will vary in design. Community needs, community demographics and services to be provided by potential partners will also vary. All the players from the education, training, job preparation, support services and business communities must come together to create programs that educate and train welfare recipients for jobs that will enable them to become economically self-sufficient.

Models in Welfare-to-Work

There are many welfare-to-work models that are worthy of consideration (D'Amico, 1997). The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) conducted a survey of nearly 100 educational institutions and organizations and identified eight model programs that are using basic skills as a fundamental component to assist welfare recipients to move successfully into the work force. Descriptions will be available in a forthcoming NIFL publication.

Additional models described below provide a broad overview of issues to examine when making decisions about the role of adult education and training in welfare reform, especially within the context of the present legislation.

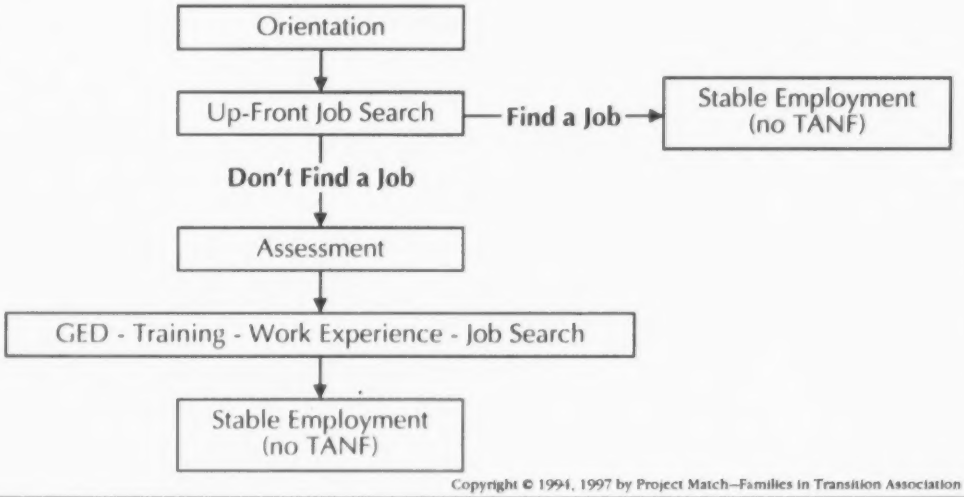
Pre-Employment Services Model

The Pre-Employment Services Model (Table 4) places all the services "up front" before a participant gets a job. Up front services are provided in the following sequence:

1. orientation
2. up-front job search
3. assessment
4. pre-employment service activity, which might include adult education, training, job preparation or community work experience
5. employment

If the participant loses a job, then he or she begins the process over again. The model follows a sequential process with work placement at the end and no support for the participant once he or she is placed in a job.

Table 4
The Typical Welfare-to-Work Program Model:
Pre-Employment Services only



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Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model

Toby Herr, Executive Director of Project Match, a welfare to work program in the Cabrini Green public housing area of Chicago, developed a Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model (Table 5) for moving individuals from welfare into work. The Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model is an alternative to the Pre-Employment Services model (Herr, Halpern and Wagner, 1995).

The Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model emphasizes some services "up front" but with the majority of the services after the first job, educational or training experience. Pre-employment services in this model include:

1. orientation
2. initial assessment and placement assistance
3. placement in an adult education program, a vocational or job training program, work or community service

Once placed in a job, on-going support is provided through post-employment services. The post-employment services can include:

1. job retention strategies such as mentoring, job coaching, counseling, job retention strategies or career advancement
2. continued support (i.e. placement assistance) and/or reassessment if a participant leaves a job
3. customized adult education program

4. vocational/job training program

5. work

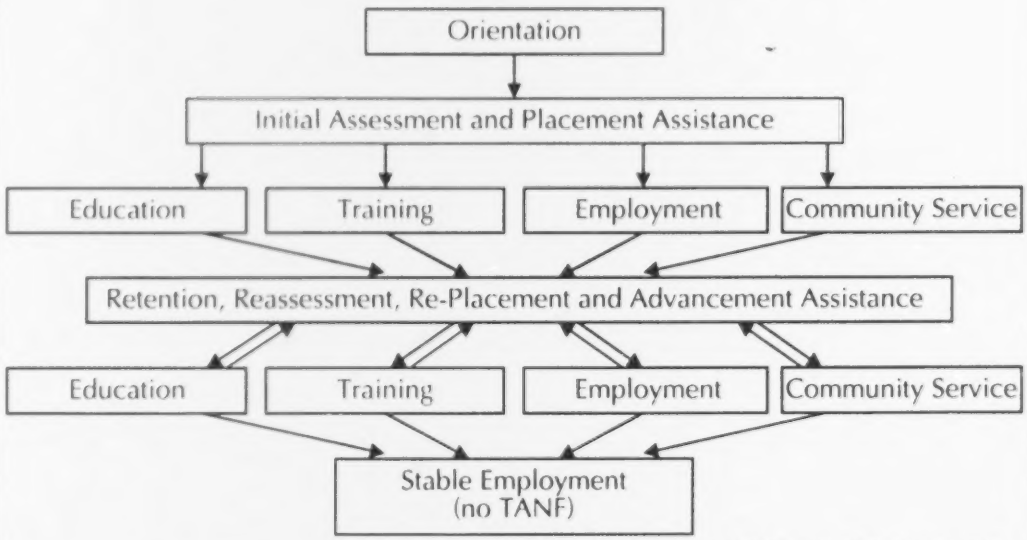
6. community service

7. a combination of work and education

The Pre-and Post-Employment Services model allows for nonlinear movement, flexibility and varied types of support depending on the participant's needs.

The Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model takes into account that welfare recipients do not always make steady progress in education, training and work. Instead, "setbacks" are normal and not viewed as failures. When setbacks occur, relevant services are delivered in a timely fashion. The sequence of activities for any particular person depends on the individual and his or her circumstances.

Table 5
An Alternative Welfare-to-Work Program Model:
Both Pre-Employment and Post-Employment Services



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Application and Extension of the Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model

Project Match has a history of studying issues and developing solutions to the many challenges faced by welfare-to-work programs. Project Match serves approximately 300 low income individuals in a year. Approximately 99% are African American, 1% Caucasian or Hispanic. All individuals are residents of inner-city Chicago. The participants have had little, if any, experience with formal work.

The purpose of describing the Project Match model in this paper is to provide a broad perspective about the role of adult education and training in welfare reform and to begin to think about the delivery of those services in both a Pre-Employment Services and Pre-and Post-Employment Services Model. Project Match has collected

and documented information about their welfare-to-work program and participants for more than thirteen years.

Though some differences exist between this program and other welfare-to-work programs, many of the challenges faced by this organization are similar to the challenges faced by other groups serving welfare participants. Therefore, lessons learned through Project Match's experiences are valuable to others.

Points of Entry

Adult education and training may be provided to participants at different "points of entry" in both the Pre-Employment and Pre-and Post-Employment Services models. The mixing and sequencing of program components will vary depending on:

1. the rules and regulations in a state's welfare plan
2. the welfare agency's referral procedures
3. the participant's skill level, educational level and work experience
4. employment opportunities
5. the number of barriers facing the individual
6. types of services and programs available within the community.

Adult education and training may be offered before employment,[12] after employment or concurrently with other program components, including work. Adult education may be integrated with other activities related to training and work thereby "reinventing" or "retooling" the program design, curriculum and instruction. Education and training activities may be provided at a public school, area vocational center, community college, community location, employment and training center or at a company site or labor hall.

As the new welfare reform unfolds, the need for post-employment services has gained more attention. As is demonstrated in the new Welfare-to-Work programs through the Department of Labor, post-employment services can include adult education. Those in the adult education and training field need to examine and identify what types of post-employment services can be provided through their programs and how these services assist individuals to remain in a job or to obtain a new job.

Contextualized Learning

It is not unusual for adult education and training to be taught within the context of work, community or family. Current adult education/literacy practice is ". . . moving away from a traditional remedial focus on generic academic disciplines [and] towards a more integrated, customer-driven approach to literacy and learning that focuses on three adult roles [adult as parent, worker and citizen]" (Stein, 1997). Studies have demonstrated that integrating adult education/literacy with job skills, parenting skills or within a functional/situational context is a promising approach to teaching adults rather than teaching basic skills first, then job or parenting skills (Sticht, 1998).

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12 Not a countable work activity for the first 20 hours of participation.

A Contextualized Program

An example of a program that takes a contextualized learning approach is the Minority Worker Training Program operated in Chicago by DePaul University's Office of Applied Innovations (OAI).[13] The program integrates literacy/basic skills, life coping skills, employability skills and technical skills training and provides employment opportunities in the environmental industry for inner city young adults. Learners participate in full day classes comprising technical training, simulated work tasks and basic skills classes that focus on math, reading, writing, listening, speaking, critical thinking and problem solving.[14]

According to OAI Executive Director, Tipawan Truong-Quang Reed, "Integration occurs in several areas [including] curriculum, instruction, staffing and the overall program design. In the curriculum and instruction . . . a nested curriculum [is used] where the workplace and job skills needed are used as the context for instruction." Instruction is provided in basic skills (reading, writing, math), job technical skills (asbestos abatement, lead abatement, hazardous waste emergency response, basic carpentry), employability skills, problem solving, critical thinking and team skills. Joint planning among the job developer, basic skills instructor and job or vocational trainer occurs so that everyone knows what is being taught and that skills are reinforced in different learning environments. The DePaul program provides supportive services in job placement, mentoring and follow-up to ensure gainful and sustainable employment. Employers advise the project through advisory committees and individual meetings.

Community Service Programs

Community Service Programs (CSP) offer fertile ground for developing unique programs for welfare participants, especially those who are not yet work ready. Community service programs are allowable work activities that count toward the state's work participation rate. The Federal Act allows each state to define community service programs. Some states include a definition in the state's plan, some do not. For those states that define community service programs, definitions vary greatly and some restrictions may apply. Usually CSP provide welfare recipients with job experience or work which is grounded within the community. The programs may be paid or unpaid and may be provided by non-profit organizations, the public sector or by the state or local government.

Many labels are used to describe CSP, including: community service option, community service program, community service employment and community service jobs.

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13 The Minority Worker Training Program is a consortium of organizations including DePaul University's Office of Applied Innovations, The People for Community Recovery, Inc., a community-based environmental justice organization located in the heart of Chicago's Altgeld Gardens and the Laubach Literacy Center for Workforce Education. Funding comes from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS).

14 Additional program models are reviewed in a report entitled, "Adult Education and Welfare to Work Initiatives: A Review of Research, Practice and Policy" by Deborah D'Amico.

These labels may reflect differences in program design and, most importantly, may reflect whether the program provides paid or unpaid jobs to welfare recipients.

An Example of a Community Service Program

The design of Community Service Programs varies tremendously among those states that are implementing them. For example, Vermont provides paid community service jobs. Vermont has created a statewide community service employment program for families who have reached the state's time limit to work or who cannot find an unsubsidized job. The welfare recipient earns an amount comparable to the previous welfare benefit. The state, not the job site, is the employer. Worksites for the program are provided by public and nonprofit organizations. The worksite provides a work activity which meets the work requirement as well as provides an employment training program.[15]

Possible Roles for Adult Education and Literacy Programs

Adult education and literacy programs are a viable vehicle through which Community Service Programs could be developed for welfare recipients. For example, adult education and literacy programs could create positions for recipients as tutors, student advocates, office assistants, curriculum developers and workers on special community projects. Adult education and literacy programs are grounded in the community and sensitive to the learning processes and work skills of learners. Many programs already hire previous learners or work with groups of learners to carry out special projects. Formalizing the learning and work experiences could lead to the development of a community service program which would also be considered a countable work activity toward the state's work participation rate.

Family Literacy and Welfare Reform

For over a decade, family literacy programs have been providing services to families on welfare. Though program designs vary, they invariably include three essential components: adult education, child's education and activities for the adult and child together. The joint adult/child activities support reciprocal learning and teaching, and they often include the learning of foundational skills, multiple literacies and inquiry skills within the context of the family. Additional components frequently include parenting classes and family support activities. More comprehensive programs provide vocational or work opportunities for the adult caregiver.

Research

Research has shown that the level of academic achievement reached by the adult caregiver will have a significant impact on the educational achievement of the child (Berlin and Sum, 1988). A parent or other significant adult in the home is a child's first teacher (Anderson et al.,1985). Adults who need to build basic skills can be at a disadvantage as a child's first teacher since the adult must first master certain skills before assisting her/his child with school work and play activities. As a result, the child can be put at a life disadvantage. Research demonstrates, however, that family

15 CLASP (Center for Law and Social Policy) Update, November 25, 1997 (ISSN 1085-7354).

literacy programs provide educational intervention which is greater than the sum of its parts – adult education and child education (Sticht, 1989). In fact, family literacy programs can be highly successful at helping parents achieve their educational goals and better prepare their children for academic success.

As outlined earlier in this paper, an estimated 66% to 75% of welfare recipients scored at the two lowest levels of the National Adult Literacy Survey and almost 50% of those on welfare do not have a High School Diploma. These statistics indicate that a significant percentage of parents on welfare may face many challenges when trying to help their children with school work. Family literacy, when effectively implemented, is an ideal platform for welfare-to-work initiatives since the programs focus on the intense education of more than one generation of a family (NCFL, 1997).

A Local Family Literacy Program

The Canton, Ohio Evenstart program has developed an integrated approach to improving the literacy, numeracy and employability skills of parents while promoting their children's developmental growth through both parental empowerment and early childhood education.

In response to welfare reform, the program focuses on work-based education. Parents and their preschool aged children arrive together at the elementary school housing the Evenstart program. Parents participate in 30 hours weekly of work-based learning at the school site while their preschool children are engaged in early childhood education activities. For the parents, the first 20 hours are spent in work or job readiness activities. The remaining 10 hours may be spent in additional work or adult education.

The parents are provided with 10 hours of career assessment before developing an Individual Career Plan. Based on this plan, parents participate in real work experiences in and around the elementary school community. Work experiences include mentoring, job shadowing, work and development of a career passport.[16] SCANS[17] skill development is emphasized during the work experience. Academic skills are taught in role contexts of family members, workers and community members.[18] Because the primary work sites are their children's schools, parenting and Parent and Child Together (PACT) time are easily integrated into work experiences.[19]

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16 The Career Passport is a portfolio containing an individual's job resume, completed job application form, samples of work and a career inventory indicating the individual's strengths.

17 The Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) developed a document defining the workplace competencies and foundation skills required for effective job performance.

18 Roles are described in the Equipped for the Future project through the National Institute for Literacy.

19 *Family Literacy Guide to Welfare Reform*, National Center for Literacy, (forthcoming).

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Role of Employers

According to a report from the National Governor's Association, "*Employers have indicated that they are willing to hire welfare recipients if they are job ready — that is, if they are literate, have good communication skills and understand the requirements of the work place*". While welfare reform emphasizes work first, there is some vagueness about the role of employers in welfare reform. If employers seek workers who are job ready and many of the welfare population is not job ready, several questions need to be answered: Are employers willing to hire welfare recipients? If yes, at what wage and with what kinds of benefits? What types of jobs are available? Are jobs full time or part time, temporary or permanent? Will employers provide education and training opportunities? Are equal opportunities being provided to all workers? Do employers have a social or community commitment?

Whether employers will hire welfare recipients also depends on the labor market. During low unemployment when the supply of workers is low and the demand is high, employers have a difficult time finding workers and may be more willing to hire welfare recipients. However, during high unemployment when the supply of workers is high and the demand is low, welfare recipients are likely to be overlooked as potential employees. Placing welfare recipients into jobs when the unemployment rate is high will be problematic because jobs will be scarce and the pool of potential workers will be large.

Strategies for Employers

Employers, who need to become partners in welfare reform at the local, state and national levels, are the key to success in removing recipients off welfare and into well-paying jobs. It takes many partners to develop effective welfare-to-work programs and policies. While some companies are taking the lead in developing these partnerships, many more companies are hesitant to participate in creating special programs to hire and provide support programs to welfare recipients.

There are a couple of simple and effective strategies companies may use when recruiting and hiring welfare recipients which do not involve the creation of special programs. One strategy is to recruit potential employees from community organizations that work with welfare recipients. In addition to advertising the position in-house and in the newspapers, human resource departments can place announcements with community organizations, schools and colleges that work with welfare recipients. This recruitment strategy places individuals on welfare and those who are not in the same employment pool. This strategy is simple and demonstrates an effort to actively seek out welfare recipients for jobs. Naturally, the higher skilled and better prepared welfare recipient would most likely succeed in this case.

A few companies are developing programs for and providing jobs specifically to individuals on welfare. Program designs vary depending on the skill level of the participant. For those individuals with higher skills, immediate job placement might be the first step. For individuals in need of basic skills while facing multiple barriers to work, education, training and support, possibly combined with work, may need to be provided.

The United Parcel Service (UPS) has created welfare-to-work programs in over 40 states throughout the nation. UPS identifies candidates through local non-profit organizations, provides necessary job training, reading and computer classes, and

offers additional support through outside organizations to help individuals remain and succeed in the UPS work force. Positions include package handlers, loaders, unloaders, sorters and porters who start at $8.50 to $9.50 per hour with full benefits.

The Welfare-to-Work Partnership

In May of 1997, Burger King, Monsanto, Sprint USA, United Airlines and UPS along with the President and two Governors formed the Welfare-to-Work Partnership through the National Alliance for Business. The purpose of the partnership is to assist companies to set up programs to hire welfare recipients without displacing other workers. Companies may commit to hire welfare recipients or mentor another company seeking to hire recipients. A company may choose to list its name in a manual entitled, *Blueprint for Business*, which is designed to assist employers to hire and retain those moving from welfare to work.[20] Thousands of companies have joined the partnership since its inception.

Other Roles for Employers

Employers can also help break down other barriers participants face when obtaining or retaining a job. For example in the metro Philadelphia area, UPS operates several facilities including a regional air facility. One of the sources through which UPS finds qualified employees is the Camden County Family Development and Job Resource Center. To help individuals commute from Camden to the Philadelphia air facility, UPS implemented a bus transportation system, operated it for two months and then turned it over to the state to operate long term. Based on the consistent level of ridership between the two cities, New Jersey Transit was willing to take over the project and institute a new bus route between Camden and Philadelphia.

The role of employers in welfare reform is more than just providing jobs. The business community must join together with those from education, job/vocational training, support services, welfare offices and job preparation programs in order to provide support and opportunities to welfare recipients. As Christine Owens, Vice President, Region Manager, West Region for UPS stated, " . . . I would advocate very strongly that employers become involved in [the political process for welfare reform] and have some voice. . . . Most employers would tell you . . . that we don't [pretend] to know how 'it' should be done. We are really saying let's get together on what the skill sets are, let's get the educational system in sync, let's take those resources and services for the people who need a little something extra and, make sure it's the right something extra, so that two years down the road, we don't find ourselves really disconnected from what we hoped would be the right direction for the journey."

Conclusion

As the clock continues to tick for those on welfare, report cards on the effectiveness of welfare reform in the 50 states have yet to be distributed to the public. While the new welfare reform has provided many challenges, there are also opportunities to fine-tune state plans to better meet the needs of individuals on welfare.

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20 Printed with permission from the Welfare-to-Work Partnership.

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Policy and programming changes are needed so that adult education and training are allowable work activities that *count* toward states' participation rates. Reasonable requirements should be placed on program designs, especially in the curricula, instruction and accountability areas. Programs should be tailored more to work, including curricula that is generalizable to a variety of jobs.

Employers often state that they will hire workers who have sound problem-solving and communication skills and who are team players. Curricula and instruction should be built around generalizable skills, such as those included in SCANS and Equipped for the Future. A few examples of those skills are: acquiring and evaluating information, organizing and maintaining information, decision-making, critical reading, active listening, conflict resolution, technology, computation and communicating in writing. In some cases, specific job skills may also be taught if an individual is preparing to work in a specific industry or job.

Many of the lessons learned from work place education programs can be applied to programs developed for welfare recipients. Providers in work place education are familiar with conducting job task analyses, tailoring curricula, developing program designs, determining program outcomes and reporting to employers.

As family literacy program models demonstrate, skills can be taught within different role contexts such as parent, citizen or worker and applied to other life roles. Skills can also be taught in a variety of settings, including on-the-job, in applied learning situations within a classroom, during tutoring sessions, in vocational classes, during parent and child activities and/or as a community activity.

As states place more welfare recipients in countable work activities, thus decreasing the pool of higher skilled recipients, the inclusion of adult education and training as a countable work activity toward states' participation rates becomes increasingly logical.

According to the *Literacy and Dependency* report, " . . . Literacy shapes and is shaped by a wide and interconnected assortment of factors." While literacy and other factors do not necessarily have a cause and effect relationship, we know ". . . it is likely that having strong literacy skills increases the likelihood of being employed. . . [and] employed individuals display stronger literacy skills than unemployed persons." We also know that the higher the educational level of an individual, the higher the income level and that an estimated 50% of welfare recipients do not have a high school diploma. In addition, people with higher basic education and literacy skills have more work available to them than people with low literacy skills.

Given this information, literacy, education and training programs must be included as necessary and integral components of welfare reform. This is not to say that work and work activities are not important, but rather, that education, literacy and training programs that meet appropriate standards should play an equal and complementary role to work and work activities.

Finally, the Work First approach may appeal to policy makers and the general public but not to those who have a strong commitment to education and training first. However, which component comes "first" is not the relevant point. What is relevant is the understanding that it takes all the players from adult education, training, job preparation, support services, business, labor, government and nonprofit organizations to weave together a comprehensive welfare-to-work program that works. Including adult education and training programs as countable activities in welfare policy

expands the points of entry for both programs and individuals and should enhance not only welfare reform but also help individuals leaving welfare to obtain economic self-sufficiency.

What is the ILRDC?

The Illinois Literacy Resource Development Center (ILRDC) is dedicated to improving adult education literacy practice and policy at the local, state and national levels. The Center is a non-profit organization supporting adult education literacy efforts throughout Illinois and the nation. One key to the Center's success has been its ability to build partnerships among the organizations, individuals and agencies from the local to the state and national levels.

The ILRDC responds to emerging issues in adult education literacy by conducting special projects and conferences and producing state-of-the-art publications. It provides guidance in the areas of assessment and evaluation, welfare reform, family literacy, work force education, resource development and public policy.

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Issues Raised Through the Jobs Program About the Role of Adult Education in Welfare Reform

Several preliminary studies have been completed regarding the effectiveness of the JOBS program. The following information is gleaned from these reports.

Facts reported on participation and employment outcomes include:

- a maximum of 11% of the AFDC caseload participated in JOBS during any measured month
- one half or less of job-ready participants became employed
- only a small percentage of JOBS clients participated in on-the-job training; 1% in unsubsidized employment; and 10% in work experience activities
- a significant portion of client parents (56% in FY92), though mandated to participate, were exempted due to child care issues

Studies cite inconsistent and limited program performance linked to several factors:

- underfunding and understaffing of JOBS
- insufficient use of job development strategies
- unclear goals of the JOBS program
- success being defined by participation rather than outcomes

Matching funds requirements caused many states to access less than the full amount of federal funds available to them, leading to underfunding of staff, programs, and supportive services.

Studies cite additional factors beyond the control of JOBS that inhibited its success. Factors included:

- the high unemployment rate of certain areas
- the variance in availability of self-sustaining jobs in the labor market
- the volatility of the low wage labor market
- the difficulty in surviving on low wages without public assistance
- lack of health insurance benefits in the part-time low wage labor market; and
- insufficient JOBS and community child care and transportation resources.

Education and training was emphasized in the federal JOBS legislation. However, little guidance was given to education and training programs at the local levels regarding what was expected of them in relation to JOBS. Studies cite factors limiting their effectiveness to include:

- success being defined by participation rather than outcomes
- vague employment expectations of the programs
- lack of agreement among JOBS and education/training staff regarding need for long-term vs short-term strategies

Adult Education programs were further inhibited in their successful participation in JOBS by:

- lack of full participation by State Directors of Adult Education in developing the state plan
- limited funding resources, mostly coming from existing Adult Education Act funds
- inconsistent and limited communication with JOBS staff at the state and local levels.

Outcomes of adult education services provided to JOBS clients included:

- approximately 60% of people on AFDC who entered adult education as part of a welfare-to-work program completed the program
- a significant portion of those both completing and not completing programs attained gains in basic skills
- attendance rates among those enrolled ranged between 50-75%, similar to the rates of those not on AFDC
- consistent and positive impacts on GED attainment were recorded.

Many of the studies of JOBS effectiveness completed thus far note the need for further longitudinal studies and analyses before drawing conclusions as to whether and how investments in adult education pay off in the labor market and in welfare reform. The "MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation) cautions that education and training programs may initially keep some participants on welfare longer, but are intended to improve the skills necessary to increase self-sufficiency in the long run. Thus, longer follow up will be necessary to identify the most effective approach (Besharov, et.al, 60).

Preliminary studies have indicated that many factors combined to limit the effectiveness both of the JOBS program overall, and that of the adult education programs providing services to it. These issues must be further examined and addressed before effective services leading to self-sufficiency for families affected by welfare reform can be delivered.

Sources:

1. Adult Education and Welfare to Work Initiatives: A Review of Research Practice and Policy, by Deborah D'Amico
2. Evaluating Welfare Reform: A Guide for Scholars and Practioners, by Douglas Besharov, Peter Germanis and Peter Rossi
3. The JOBS Evaluation. Adult Education for People on AFDC: A Synthesis of Research for the U.S. Departments of Education and Human Services by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
4. The Promise of JOBS: Policies, Programs and Possibilities, by Forrest Chisman and Renee Woodworth

Possible Components of Integrated Programming

- **Assessment/ Orientation (other items may be included depending on the program)**
  - Skill level (assessment)
  - Work history/ non history
  - Client interests/ preference
  - Barriers (domestic violence, substance abuse, homelessness, child care, transportation, legal, health, etc)
  - Goals, objectives, activities
  - Progress
- **Adult Education**[21]
  - Reading, writing, math, communication, problem-solving, computer skills, life skills (ABE, GED, ESL)
- **Vocational training**
  - Occupational training (generalizable to many jobs, not just one job)
  - Job skills/technical training
  - Classroom instruction with "hands on" learning
- **Job readiness**[22] (goes beyond job seeking skills to include a range of general work place skills required for people to succeed and thrive in any work environment)[23]
  - Communication, listening and problem solving skills
  - Self image, self esteem as related to success in the work place
  - Team work
  - Self motivation
  - Understanding formal and informal organizational structures
  - Impact of personal and professional values, choices and behaviors on the effectiveness of the organization

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21 May be integrated with other components or "stand-alone". We are moving toward integrating basic skills and work and work readiness skills.

22 May be combined with job search and life skills.

23 Taken from " Building an Effective Welfare-to-Work Strategy for Illinois:" Recommendations from a state response to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, Chicago Jobs Council, 1996.

- **Job search**[24] [25]
  - Job seeking skills
  - Resumes
  - Letters of introduction
  - How to interview
  - Resources for job search (computers, phone)
  - Close tie to job developer
- **Job development** (people for jobs, not jobs for people)[26]
  - May be tied to job search
  - Persuading employers to hire welfare clients
  - Learning the needs of the employers and community
  - Identifying jobs for individuals (clients) in the community
- **Support services**
  - Child care
  - Transportation
  - Health care
  - Initial employment expenses
- **Community/Volunteer service**
  - Head Start
  - Churches
  - Boy/ Girl scouts
  - Councils
- **Post-employment services**
  - Job coaching/ mentoring
  - Retention strategies
  - Support between jobs/ transition
  - Career development
  - Additional education and training
- **Work**
  - Unsubsidized employment
  - Subsidized (private/public) employment
  - Work experience
  - On-the-job training
  - Community service
  - Job search (6 weeks)
  - Vocational education (30% of work participation rate)

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24 Taken from "Building an Effective Welfare-to-Work Strategy for Illinois:" Recommendations for a State Response to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, Chicago Jobs Council, 1996.

25 May be combined with job readiness or job development. May also be on-going while individuals participate in other components.

26 Taken from Project Match

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